

Scottish Religious Influences in Colonial Australia, 1788-1900

MALCOLM D. PRENTIS, BA., M.A., Ph.D.

"The Scots overseas" is an under-developed subject in Scottish historiography. Over a quarter of a million Scots emigrated to Australia in the colonial period. They ranged from cottars and labourers to clan chiefs and wealthy merchants. They were more literate as a group than either the English or Irish; they came mostly from the Lowlands but were more rural in origin than the English and were much more skilled than the Irish; most adults were young and married. With the exception of South Australia, where more Englishmen and Germans and fewer Scots and Irish migrated, the pattern of settlement was fairly uniform. Overall, a fair estimated breakdown *circa* 1900 would be English and Welsh 60%, Irish 25% and Scots 10% by birth or ancestry. This was reflected in the religious composition — Anglicanism was strongest everywhere, followed by Roman Catholicism, presbyterianism, Methodism and Lutheranism. South Australia was weak in Catholicism and presbyterianism, extremely strong in Methodism and strongest in Lutheranism. Presbyterianism was also relatively weaker in Tasmania and Western Australia, and stronger in Victoria. Presbyterianism was an essential part of the "invisible luggage" carried by most Scottish immigrants; the Scots were about 97% protestant and 85% presbyterian; and presbyterians as a whole were about 85% Scottish. Nevertheless, Scots made interesting, though small contributions to other forms of belief.

The tiny minority of Scots who were Roman Catholic made a disproportionate impact in that denomination. A convert from presbyterianism, William Augustine Duncan, was one of the leading laymen in New South Wales as editor of Roman Catholic journals in the 1840s and 1850s, and thereafter had a long and distinguished career as a senior civil servant. One of Archbishop Polding's Benedictines was a dour scholarly Fife man, Fr John Kenny. The Highlanders, however, made the biggest mark. Australia's first saint is likely to be Mother Mary McKillop, founder of a teaching order of nuns, who was the daughter of Highland immigrants. Her brother Donald was a priest. Fr Ranald Rankin ministered to Roman Catholic Highlanders around Geelong in Victoria in their own language. Fr Duncan McNab was an outstanding missionary to the Aborigines in

¹ These figures are derived from the author's Macquarie University Ph.D. thesis "The Scots in Australia: a study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 1788-1900".

Queensland and Western Australia in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

There were some Scottish episcopalians in the colonies from early years, as well as some converts from presbyterianism in the 1830s and 1840s.² At the end of last century, William Chalmers was Bishop of Goulburn in New South Wales. There were several prominent Scots laymen in the colonial Church of England as well as ministers.

One of the founders of congregationalism in New South Wales was the Rev. Robert Ross, who was minister of the "mother church", Pitt Street congregation, Sydney, from 1839 to 1854. His Melbourne counterpart was another Scot, the Rev. Alexander Gosman. The first Baptist preacher in Australia was a Highlander, John McKaeg, in the 1830s. One of the Scots premiers of Victoria, was a Baptist layman. In South Australia, where Methodism was extraordinarily strong, one of the leading, pioneering clergy of the primitive Methodists was a Glaswegian, the Rev. Hugh Gilmore.

Methodism, in some areas (especially in South Australia), often attracted good presbyterians away from the Kirk. This was partly because of the warmth of piety and fellowship to be found there, and partly because the Methodists were often first in the field, with their flexible circuit and lay-preacher system.

In the third quarter of last century, the senior minister of the Melbourne Hebrew community was Rabbi Moses Rintel from Edinburgh. Another small but vocal minority were the free-thinkers. Two prominent New South Wales M.P.s, David Buchanan, and son of the manse, John Bowie Wilson, well represented that point of view. John Alexander Dowie, the founder of "Zion City" near Chicago, passed some of his earlier eccentric phases in Australia. Hugh Junor Brown is amusingly described by his biographer as "spiritualist and distiller".³

It was, of course, on and through the presbyterian church that Scots exerted their predominant religious influence in colonial Australia. How did Scottish presbyterianism adapt itself to Australian conditions; how did it help shape those conditions; and how Scottish was the colonial presbyterian church?

Just as there were tensions within the Church of Rome in Australia between Roman and Irish loyalties, there were tensions among Scots presbyterians in Australia. In the main, these tensions reflected tensions in Scotland; the drift from "Scots presbyterians in Australia" to "Australian presbyterians" happened almost without a fight.

2 M. D. Prentis, "The Defection of Scots from their Kirk in New South Wales: the Significance of 1838", *The Push from the Bush*, vii (September 1980), 51-7.

3 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, iii, 266-7.

As the Rev. J. D. Lang told a group of young presbyterians in 1863, 40 years after his arrival, "they would do more good to their country by retaining the local and ecclesiastical distinctions of their fatherland".⁴ A more recently-arrived colleague differed: "the new life of the Church in a new country takes a development proper to its local experience".⁵ In practice, there was some, but not much overt, practical disagreement in the Kirk on this point. If there had been such a confrontation, the Kirk would perhaps have been able to work through it, in order to broaden its appeal, and hold the allegiance of those who drifted to the more activist and expansionist Methodists or "quasi-established" Anglicans.

The three aspects of colonial presbyterianism to be investigated are, first, the composition of church leadership, secondly, the relationship of church and state, and, lastly, the life and work of the church. Before discussing these topics, however, a brief outline of the foundations of Australian presbyterianism is necessary.

Between 1788 and 1822, there was no presbyterian minister in the colonies. Devout Scottish laymen had indeed worshipped in the manner of their fathers, but presbyterianism was essentially unorganised and the religion of a tiny minority until the 1820s. In that decade, the number of Scots and presbyterian immigrants increased and the first ministers arrived to shepherd the scattered flock. It is of real, as well as symbolic, importance that the first three ministers came from the three main branches of presbyterianism in Scotland. The first to arrive was the Rev. Archibald MacArthur in Hobart in 1822, from the United Secession Church. The second was the famous (or notorious) Rev. John Dunmore Lang, whose sympathies lay with the evangelical wing of the Church of Scotland, and who arrived in Sydney in 1823. Third to arrive was a moderate in both senses of the word, the Rev. John McGarvie, in Sydney in 1826.

Many of the early problems of the Australian Kirk stemmed from Lang's restlessness, his schemes, his personal vendettas, his conveniently changing ecclesiological views and his generous view of his own importance, as much as from the great Disruption itself. A presbytery of New South Wales was formed in 1832, only to be disrupted by Lang in 1837 on a high principle of church-state relations, detectable only by Lang and a handful of his followers.

The two bodies were brought together as the Synod of Australia in 1840, only to lose Lang in 1842 when he strangely converted to voluntarism and roundly condemned the synod, only to be deposed from the ministry. (The deposition was confirmed by the presbytery of Irvine, which had originally ordained Lang in

⁴ *The Presbyterian Magazine*, May 1863, 157.

⁵ The Rev. Dr Robert Steel, *ibid.*, January 1863, 2.

1822.) Lang continued as an independent until 1850, when he created another synod of New South Wales, committed to voluntary principles and open to recruits from virtually every denomination. In effect, Lang's synod stood *in loco* the United Presbyterian in New South Wales.

Presbyterianism, meanwhile, was being organised in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. In all the colonies, the full complement of presbyterian factions was present. After 1846, when the Disruption had its antipodean consequence, there were at least three separate bodies in each colony: the "established", "Free" and United Presbyterians. (In some colonies at some times, these were even further sub-divided, and some congregations effectively independent.)

In organisation, then, Australian presbyterianism was in a turmoil until the reunion of most of the fragments between 1859 and 1870. In church affairs, as in secular, New South Wales was the mother colony, establishing the church in the later separate colonies of Victoria and Queensland. The Tasmanian and South Australian churches both had independent origins, but during the nineteenth century were increasingly influenced and helped by their stronger neighbour, Victoria. The infant cause in Western Australia was organised as a presbytery of the Victorian church in the 1890s. From the 1860s, Victoria had the strongest presbyterian church in Australia.

The most fundamental Scottish impact on the colonial Australian presbyterian churches was in providing the bulk of their leadership as well as of their members until about 1880. Whatever else the church did, there is evidence that it acted in part "to satisfy the patriotism of men from Scotland or Ulster", to quote a complaint of 1869.⁶ Five years later, in the town of Forbes in western New South Wales, it was found that native-born presbyterians had begun to wander, allegedly because of an undue adherence to Scottish style.⁷ Then in 1889, a young minister of English ancestry wrote to Principal Kinross of St Andrew's College, Sydney, in great distress, wanting guidance as to where his ministry had gone wrong. "Perhaps if I were of Scotch or Irish extraction . . . it would have been easier for me to succeed in (the Presbyterian) ministry".⁸ Cases of this sort, however, are a minority phenomenon; and, in general, there seems a close correlation between the strength of the presbyterian

6 A. C. Geikie, *Why Presbyterians leave their Own Church* (Sydney, 1869), 30.

7 A. A. Aspinall to J. D. Lang, 5 July 1876, quoted by R. B. Walker, "Presbyterian Church and People in the Colony of New South Wales in the Late Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of Religious History*, ii, 1 (June 1962), 55.

8 National Library of Australia, Kinross Papers, Box, 2. C. Crane to J. Kinross, 14 Jan. 1889.

cause and of the Scottish community. (This seems to hold true in comparing colonies, regions as well as city and country.)

The financial success of Scots in various areas of enterprise also helped the presbyterian cause in practical ways. Money from wool, gold, manufacturing, trade and investments in land enabled many pious Scots presbyterians to build churches, schools and colleges, and to import and pay for ministers. This was especially the case in Victoria, where the Western District pastoralists were outstandingly munificent. J. D. Wyselaskie, for example, left £30,000 to the Theological Hall when he died in 1883. All told, over £112,000 of Francis Ormond's money went into the college bearing his name at Melbourne University, both before and after his death in 1889. In 1872, the Rev. Peter S. Menzies of Scots Church, Melbourne, and some wealthy laymen got together to bring out three or four "additional ministers of superior stamp".⁹ Though Scots in the other colonies could not match Victoria's Scots, similar gifts came in. In 1873, a successful gold-seeker in New South Wales brought out three Free Church ministers. This was Joseph Paxton, said to have been precentor at Glasgow Cathedral. The Hunter Baillie fortune in the 1880s financed the building of possibly the finest Gothic revival church in Sydney, and later funded professorships and scholarships.

Though the presbyterian laity were mostly Scots (or Ulstermen) or of Scots descent throughout the colonial period, the proportion declined. The ministry, however, was generally even more Scottish, and was so for longer. Even later, when locally-trained ministers became available, they were "sent bush", while Scotsmen continued to occupy influential urban pulpits.

Information on the subject of ministers can be derived mainly from a detailed study of clergy in the three colonies with the most significant presbyterian churches.¹⁰ The main conclusion is that most recruits up to the 1890s were Scots by birth, though not necessarily by training. By the 1880s, local trainees were a large minority, though only in Victoria did they outnumber those trained elsewhere.

There were interesting differences in recruitment patterns among the three colonies. In all three, Scots-born ministers formed a majority of recruits till 1900. The majority in Victoria was a bare one, clear in Queensland and nearly two-thirds in New South Wales. New South Wales had the smallest proportion of Irishmen (30 out of 399), Victoria had 56 out of 505, whereas Queensland had the extraordinary ratio of 27 out of 132. New South Wales had fewer Irish than English-born ministers (Victoria and Queensland had much fewer of the latter), many of

⁹ La Trobe Library, Melbourne, Mackinnon Papers, P. S. Menzies to D. MacKinnon, 2 Dec. 1872.

¹⁰ M. D. Prentis, "The Scots in Australia", 418-34.

whom came from non-presbyterian backgrounds. New South Wales also had fewer of its own trainees than the other two colonies.¹¹

If the denominational origins of Scottish ministers in the colonial kirks are examined, other significant patterns emerge. Approximately 525 Scottish-born men joined the ministry in the three colonies to 1900 (a few were counted twice or thrice, because they moved colonies). About one half were from the Free Church tradition, one quarter from the "established" tradition, one fifth from the U.P. tradition, and the rest from non-presbyterian denominations or smaller groups such as the Reformed Presbyterians. In other words, the proportions were rather different from those pertaining in Scotland. The strength of the Free Church contribution was more marked in Victoria (56%) than in New South Wales (46%) or Queensland (40%). The U.P. tradition was strongest in Queensland (32%), followed by Victoria (20%) and New South Wales (15%).

Clearly, the "established", or "moderate" tradition was weak and that of "dissenters" and "evangelicals" strong. This is one important reason for the conservatism of the colonial churches in doctrine and liturgy, and acquiescence in a very business-like and largely pragmatic approach to church government and finance.

Although it could be argued that the colonial churches generally received Scotland's "second rate" ministers, this is not the whole story. For a start, Scotland's "second rate" exports were intellectually better equipped as a body than the clergy of any other colonial denomination.¹² And some were certainly outstanding in various ways. As a general rule, Victoria's Scottish clergy stood out more than that of the other colonies.

Just as Scots dominated leadership in the colonial kirks virtually until they became state churches in a federation in 1901, Scottish forms and trends decisively moulded the life and work of the Australian churches. By "life and work" is meant worship and preaching, church architecture, church organisations, personal devotion and theology, social concerns and political attitudes. To what extent were these adapted to Australian conditions? To what extent did the colonial churches adhere to Scottish forms?

To colonial presbyterians, public worship was the most important church activity; and in the colonial period, major

11 Twentieth-century developments seem to reflect these trends: Queensland presbyterianism with its strong Irish flavour, New South Wales the "odd one out" over church union in 1977, and Victoria the self-confident, most strongly Scottish church.

12 Research is partial so far. Professor K. Cable of Sydney University is working on the Anglicans. See also K. T. Livingston, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood 1835-1915* (Sydney, 1977).

changes in worship were introduced. It might be expected that environmental influences would cause colonial presbyterians to modify their austere traditions of worship. Certainly, by 1900, it was a rare presbyterian church (if any could be found, outside the "wee Frees") which had not adopted instrumental music, hymns, sitting to pray, standing to sing and other changes. The main explanation for these changes, however, is not that Australian presbyterians wished to adopt the practices of most fellow-Christians in their country, but that they were simply following changes "at home", albeit up to a generation later.

The strength of the Free Church tradition in Australia, added to the geographical isolation of the colonies, goes far to explaining the slowness of changes in worship. There was a real battle for the innovations in some areas. The battle was fiercest in Victoria, where the "Free" tradition was strongest, whereas in New South Wales there was far less acrimony, no doubt owing partly to the relative strength of "established" and non-presbyterian traditions there. It is also noticeable that change was earliest and easiest in congregations with predominantly U.P. traditions. The debate on these innovations, such as it was, clearly reflected Scottish arguments of 15 to 30 years before.¹³

The traditions of Scottish preaching were faithfully followed in the Australian Kirk, even in blazing summer heat. Here again, the trend to shorter sermons followed Scottish changes. It is also interesting, and somewhat alarming, to find a leading minister¹⁴ using the same sermons 50 years after arriving from Scotland, where he had been schooled by Cunningham, Duncan and Black.

What of church architecture? The same trend away from austere Scottish presbyterian traditions is observable as in Scotland, though delayed. Indeed, the high central pulpit continued to be the norm in presbyterian churches built up to the 1940s, although placing it to the side of the sanctuary became acceptable much earlier. Scots Church in Sydney (built 1824-6) was simple, plain, even austere; whereas Scots Church in Melbourne (1874) was designed by two Englishmen in full-blown gothic revival. Scottish architects designed a few Australian churches, imparting a Scottish solidity and simple dignity. Chalmers Church in Sydney was like this, designed by one of its deacons, the long-time Colonial Architect, James Johnstone Barnett. Concern for an Australian style did not emerge until well into the twentieth century.

When the challenges of the modern scientific age faced Scots

13 See M. D. Prentis, "Changes in Presbyterian Worship in Colonial Australia", *Church Heritage*, ii, 1 (March, 1981), 46-57.

14 This was the Rev. John Kinross (1833-1908). Principal of St Andrew's College, University of Sydney from 1875 to 1901. He was awarded an honorary D.D. by the University of Edinburgh in 1885.

presbyterians in Australia, they responded in a very similar manner to their brethren at home. Theological tensions simply came to Australia with the immigrants and in print and letters. It is interesting, though, that the response of churchmen in New South Wales to biblical criticism, evolution and similar questions was rather different from that of their brethren in Victoria. This is obvious on the surface: Victoria had a divisive heresy case in the 1880s, whereas New South Wales avoided one until the 1930s.

It is not that the clergy of New South Wales were unaware of what was going on: the preaching and correspondence of such ministers as J. D. Lang, Robert Steel, John Kinross, A. C. Geikie, Archibald Cameron and William Grant from the 1850s to the 1890s show keen interest in Darwin, the higher critics, *Essays and Reviews* and the Robertson Smith case.¹⁵ It has been shown that there was a tendency in New South Wales to ignore or suppress rather than confront the challenges of rationalism and science.¹⁶ Kinross put his finger on it: New South Wales "is not a field for much speculation".¹⁷

Victoria, on the other hand, was dominated by a strongly Calvinistic Free Church tradition and had more theological talent on both liberal and conservative wings. No professor of Systematic Theology at the Melbourne Theological Hall up to 1926 had been trained anywhere but in a college of the Free Church of Scotland. The challenge also was imported from Scotland: the Rev. Charles Strong, called to Scots Church, Melbourne, in 1875. Strong had been brought up in the "moderate" tradition of the Church of Scotland and schooled in Hegelian idealism under Caird of Glasgow and in Germany itself. Tension was high anyway because of the Robertson Smith case at home, and Strong was not only comprehensively out of harmony with the sorts of presbyterian traditions dominant in Victoria, but was indiscreet about it. Dr Don Chambers has persuasively argued that the campaign which led to Strong's deposition in 1883 was not merely one obsessed with the minutiae of Calvinism, but rather sprang from a deep and very Scottish suspicion of idealist "subjectivity" on the part of most leaders of the Victorian church.¹⁸

Traditions of social concern, too, were exported to Australia. In the nineteenth century, such concern was deep but narrow, and rarely channelled through the institution of the church. At the depth of the great depression of the 1890s, a genuinely

15 See M. D. Prentis, "The Scots in Australia", 452-56.

16 R. B. Walker, "Presbyterian Church and People", 50-1.

17 National Library of Australia, Kinross Papers, J. Kinross to J. Freer, 20 Aug. 1861.

18 D. Chambers, Review of C. R. Badger, *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church* (Melbourne, 1971), in *Historical Studies*, xv, 59 (October 1972), 470.

concerned minister nevertheless criticised many unemployed for "want of backbone . . . a malaise rare in men of Scottish descent". He went on:¹⁹

"All grandmotherly plans of helping people to be self-helpful are out of keeping with the hereditary genius of the Scots section of our people — a dour determination to be their own helpers, to fight their own battles, and maintain 'the glorious privilege of being independent'."

The sort of social concern embodied in Thomas Chalmers, Thomas Guthrie and James Begg was echoed in a small minority of colonial Australian presbyterians. Two examples must suffice. The most famous was the Rev. Dr J. D. Lang, who constantly involved himself in "schemes" for immigration, education, missions to Aborigines and political reform. While most of Australia's Scots were rather complacent liberals, Lang was a radical democrat. An elder and former Free Church missionary, Alexander Riddel, brought social concern to the General Assembly of New South Wales in the 1890s, with little practical result. Riddel was active in the early Labor Party and later founded a co-operative store.²⁰ In other colonies the pattern was similar. In Victoria, the deposed Charles Strong also became a noted social reformer. Mainstream clergy and members generally confined themselves to issues like sabbatarianism, temperance and sexual ethics. Once again, Australian Scots experienced home developments some years later.

Church organisations imitated Scots precedents, though uniformed groups have never been as popular as in Scotland, perhaps indicating an antipodean anti-authoritarian influence. Nevertheless, Sunday schools, boys' brigades and women's guilds were common in Australian churches. The seemingly indigenous form of youth work, the "Fellowship Association" originated at St Stephen's, Sydney, in 1874, and spread to other colonies in the 1880s. While the Fellowship movement developed its own programme and ethos, it owes its genesis to Neil Livingston who had belonged to a similar group in Rutherglen in the 1860s.²¹

Disruption and reunion is a pattern common to presbyterianism almost everywhere. Colonial Australia was no exception. The issues which disrupted presbyterianism in Australia were Scottish issues. Even the impulse to reunite was partly (perhaps mainly) Scottish. The presbyterian cause was

19 The Rev. Dr W. S. Frackleton, an Ulsterman, in *The Presbyterian*, 17 March 1894, quoted by J. D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910* (Melbourne, 1972), 42.

20 R. B. Walker, "Presbyterian Church and People", 59; J. D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform*, 39-40.

21 M. D. Prentis, *Fellowship: a History of the Presbyterian Fellowship Movement in New South Wales 1874-1977* (Sydney, 1977), 2-9.

disrupted (or started separately) in all colonies except Western Australia. The splits were healed between 1859 and 1870, except in Tasmania, where they lasted until 1896. Indeed, the Victorian reunion of 1859 is thought to have been the first comprehensive presbyterian reunion anywhere.

John Dunmore Lang's secessions of 1837 and 1842 may be argued to have been purely Australian, with little Scottish precedent. This is no doubt true superficially, but Lang, though eccentric, was very dependent on Scottish ideas, as well as American ones. His synod was voluntarist like the United Presbyterians, and many of his clergy had that background. Voluntarism as a creed, however, had little appeal, and Lang's synod would have been in imminent danger of collapse if it had not united in 1864.

The major disruption occurred in 1846 as an echo of the Great Disruption of 1843, despite the misgivings of a small minority of colonial churchmen who believed that the issues were not applicable to Australian conditions. These misgivings only postponed the inevitable. Some of these men separated themselves altogether or stayed in the "established" synod on principle, despite Free Church sympathies. There were abortive reunion proposals from 1847 to 1853, but only in the late 1850s did the tide turn in favour of reunion.

Reunion became possible partly because of local pressures, and partly because of Scottish factors. The crying need for concerted action in a frontier society was persuasive, especially after the success of the Victorian reunion. The abolition of state aid to religion in 1862 was significant in New South Wales. The restoration of J. D. Lang to the ministry by the Church of Scotland in the same year, after Lang had gone to the Court of Session, also helped.

The Scottish influence was decisive. After 1853, a number of Scots ministers arrived who were to be the leaders of the Australian churches for the rest of the century. Most of these men favoured reunion in the colonies, and worked effectively for it. Importantly, many of them had impeccable Free Church credentials. As early as 1855, the Free Church of Scotland expressed regret at the colonial disruptions and urged their colonial brethren to seek unity.²² (The "established" synod had always wanted reunion.) The encouragement of the home churches, then, was an important factor in reunion. This encouragement was put into practical effect by the pro-unionist clergy sent out in the 1850s and early 1860s. The Rev. Dr Adam Cairns in Victoria and the Rev. Dr Robert Steel in New South

22 K. R. Campbell, "Presbyterian Conflicts in New South Wales, 1837-1865", *The Journal of Religious History*, v, 3 (June 1969), 246.

Wales provided great leadership for unionists in the Free Church synods. In short, although arguments about local needs appealed widely, especially to the laity, the union had to be achieved by Scottish ecclesiastical politicians.²³

Reunion was received both in the colonies and at home with almost universal relief. The first moderator of the New South Wales General Assembly in 1865, the Rt Rev. Adam Thomson expressed the hope that "discordant materials" would be combined "into an instrument of increased Christian efficiency".²⁴ This was certainly to be true in Victoria and to a slightly lesser extent in Queensland and New South Wales, but it was too late to rescue completely the weak causes in South Australia and Tasmania. It is also worth noting that though the "discordant materials" were to be mixed in the colonial churches, the different presbyterian traditions still asserted distinctive influences for years to come.

Assimilation of immigrants is a controversial concept in both scholarly and political circles. There is insufficient space to canvass this controversy,²⁵ but the evidence²⁶ points to the Scots in Australia being a group very successfully assimilated in the evolving society of colonial Australia, occupationally, personally and geographically. The Scottish influence on this evolving society was grossly disproportionate to the number of Scots. The contribution made by Scots has frequently been taken for granted in Australia or, at least, has not been recognised as Scottish, probably because of the extent to which the Scots had become assimilated. Yet there were other aspects, too, where the assimilation was far from complete. The outstanding example is the Kirk, which was seen by those inside and outside it as a Scottish institution. It proved to be a useful anchor for many Scots-Australians.

There is also evidence that the Scots responded to the strange Australian landscape more positively than did Englishmen, who were used to a softer, greener, tamer environment. A particularly apt illustration comes from the pen of the Rev. William Fotheringham Robertson, who felt compensated for the loss of Highland scenery by the "vast spaces and mountain scenery of the Australian bush".²⁷

23 This argument is enlarged upon in M. D. Prentis, "Colonial Ecumenism: Aspects of Presbyterian Reunion in New South Wales, 1865", *Church Heritage*, i, 3 (March 1980), 219-39.

24 *The Presbyterian Magazine*, October 1865, 303. (This journal was founded in 1862 by the Rev. Dr Robert Steel specifically to promote reunion.)

25 See M. D. Prentis, "The Scots in Australia", 476-81.

26 *Ibid.*, 481-90.

27 W. F. Robertson, *Out West for Thirty Years: Notes of a Ministry in the Real Australia* (Sydney, 1920), 169.

Scots-Australians became the most middle-class of Australia's founding ethnic groups. Their ethos was important in shaping colonial Australia's predominantly liberal, protestant, moderately egalitarian, middle class, home-owning ethos. The English-born author, Marcus Clarke, rather sardonically spoke of the "future Australian" in 1877: "His religion will be a form of Presbyterianism; his national polity a democracy tempered by the rate of exchange".²⁸

28 M. A. H. Clarke, "The Future Australian Race: our Children", in *A Marcus Clarke Reader*, ed. W. Wannan (Melbourne, 1963), 30.